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SUBJECT: UN/SIERRA LEONE SPECIAL COURT: MANAGEMENT  
COMMITTEE PLANS MARCH 27-31 VISIT TO FREETOWN TO PRESS FOR  
GREATER COURT EFFICIENCY IN LIGHT OF DWINDLING RESOURCES

¶1. USUN management-reform (M/R) officer joined other Sierra Leone Special Court Management Committee members in a formal meeting March 13 to discuss the Committee's upcoming trip to Freetown, the Court's precarious financial future, and the need to prod the Court's judges to increase judicial efficiency and bring the three ongoing trials to a close, ideally by the end of 2006/early 2007, without compromising judicial independence and integrity.

¶2. Prodded by USUN M/R officer, Committee members carefully considered the Court's current financial situation. The Court has sufficient funds (\$6.2 million in bank accounts, plus \$3.3 million in pledged funds - expected shortly) to continue operating through the end of July 2006. If, as Special Court liaison officer Georgia Tortora suggested, the USG were to contribute \$5-6 million, as was hoped, the Court would be able to continue functioning until late September/early October. Additional contributions from other Member States would prolong the Court's work even further. Committee members agreed that the SYG should prepare a new letter to Member States soliciting additional voluntary contributions. Equally importantly, Committee members agreed that they needed to deliver a strong message to Court personnel -- particularly to the judges -- during the Committee's March 27-31 visit to Freetown, stressing the importance of greater judicial efficiencies to expedite completion of the Court's work.

¶3. Committee members also discussed the January 30, 2006 version of the Court's Completion Strategy prepared by Court Registrar Lovemore Munlo. USUN M/R officer said the target completion dates of mid to late 2007 identified in the report were unrealistic in light of the Court's present financial situation. It was misleading to suggest there would be sufficient voluntarily-contributed funds to cover Court costs through both calendar years 2006 and 2007. USUN M/R officer noted that it would be irresponsible for the Committee to endorse or approve this latest Completion Strategy that envisioned the Court functioning well into 2007 without first ensuring there would be adequate funding sources. Key Court personnel, including the judges, needed to confront this reality and consider alternate strategies that might expedite completion by the end of 2006 of at least the trial phases of the three cases now underway, and perhaps the appeals phase in the AFRC and CDF cases. Otherwise, there was a real danger the Court would run out of funding before the three ongoing cases were completed. The judges were responsible for ensuring judicial fairness and the proper administration of justice, but they also bore responsibility for guaranteeing judicial efficiency as well.

¶4. UN Office of Legal Affairs representative Stadler Trengove informed Committee members that the vacancy

announcement for the position of Deputy Registrar to date had generated five applications. Trengove said the closing date for the announcement was March 27. USUN M/R officer requested that the names and CVs of the prospective candidates be circulated to all Committee members as soon as possible so that the Committee, in coordination with Court Registrar Munlo, could select the best qualified candidate. Unlike in previous conversations on this issue, Sierra Leone Deputy PermRep Kanu and Nigerian Minister Ndekhedehe did not contest the Committee's role in the Deputy Registrar selection process.

15. Committee members will reconvene the week of March 20 for a briefing by a representative of Human Rights Watch, and to finalize talking points to be conveyed to Court personnel when the Committee visits Freetown March 27-31. USUN M/R officer will continue to underscore the urgency of completing the Court's work as quickly as possible, given the lack of adequate funding to sustain the Court even to the end of 2006.

BOLTON